

**U. S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS**  
**NASHVILLE DISTRICT**  
**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

Proposed Master Plan Update  
J. Percy Priest Lake

1. The original J. Percy Priest Lake Master Plan was approved in 1966 and last updated in 1986. This document serves as a guide for coordination of project development and management of all land and water resources. Since the 1986 update, public use patterns have changed tremendously and the project receives constant pressure for recreation and outgrants. Therefore an updated Master Plan is needed to address changes and outline measures to best provide facilities and services while ensuring conservation and protection of the project and environmental resources. The intent of an updated Master Plan is to present a current inventory and assessment of resources, provide an analysis of resource use, and evaluate existing and future needs required to protect and improve the value of resources at J. Percy Priest.

2. An Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared following the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Council for Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR, 1500-1517), and Corps of Engineers Regulations ER 200-2-2 *Policy and Procedures for Implementing NEPA* (33 CFR, 230). The EA was prepared to describe existing conditions and evaluate potential impacts associated with the requested action and alternatives. Alternatives evaluated include the following: 1. no action, which means there would be no supplement to the existing Master Plan and no new resource classification, assessment, and inventory would occur; 2. full implementation of the proposed Master Plan update, which would incorporate three actions: a) outdated information would be revised to reflect current status and classification of project facilities and lands, conditions, and usage, b) future uses and demands would be outlined, and c) corridors would be designated for existing and future outgrants of project lands; and, 3. implementation of a revised scope of the proposed Master Plan update which would include evaluating actions, comments, or requests that result from public review of the EA and Master Plan Update. Following circulation to the public and state and federal agencies, no new proposals were presented that could not be addressed in Alternative 2, Full Implementation, which is the preferred alternative.

3. The EA does not reveal significant impacts resulting from the proposed action. No significant impacts are anticipated to water quality or aquatic resources by the proposed activity. Impacts to terrestrial resources and environmentally sensitive areas, which may include state or Federally-listed endangered or threatened species, would be avoided or minimized with designated corridors for outgrant requests. Outgrant requests would be evaluated to ensure proposed design location and layout meet criteria outlined in the Master Plan and this EA. Those meeting criteria may require additional coordination with agencies such as US Fish and Wildlife Service and Tennessee Historical Commission to ensure compliance with applicable Acts. Proposals that do not meet the criteria would be further evaluated and may require additional

environmental assessments. The full implementation alternative would allow the most comprehensive Master Plan update that best reflects environmental stewardship and conservation of J. Percy Priest project lands and waters while meeting public, social, and economic demands.

Impacts of the “no action” alternative would result in no new resource analysis and allocation, nor would a project sites’ inventory be completed. Operation and management of J. Percy Priest would continue as outlined in the 1986 Master Plan Update.

4. A scoping letter was issued on February 26, 2007. Comments are summarized below. Tennessee Historical Commission requested additional coordination. TDEC, Division of Natural Areas supported updating the Master Plan and asked the Corps use provided data to consider rare species habitat protection in the update. TDEC, Division of Water Supply provided a review of water supplies within the project area and stated that any work planned within the project area should address construction and drainage around/through sinkholes. TDEC, Air Pollution Control Division does not expect the action alternative to adversely impact local air quality if adequate measures are employed to control fugitive emissions and waste is properly disposed. TDEC, Division of Solid Waste and Division of Recreation Educational Services did not see anything of concern for their offices with the proposed Master Plan update.

Tennessee Wildlife Federation commented it strongly supports the alternative to update the Master Plan and requested the EA address impacts of land uses on the resource, impacts on natural resources management, and greenway connection corridors. Smyrna Department of Parks and LaVergne Department of Parks commented they are interested in ensuring continued execution of outgrant proposals for use of lands surrounding J. Percy Priest for greenways and park development. Consolidated Utility District, which provides water supply to Rutherford County through J. Percy Priest Lake withdrawals, expressed concerns for water quality of the lake and water quantity as it sees a need for additional withdrawals.

All but one issue raised has been addressed in the Environmental Assessment. Water quantity and water withdrawals are not addressed in this EA. This issue is beyond the scope of this review and would be addressed through the Corps Hydrology and Hydraulics Branch.

5. The EA was circulated to local, state, and federal governmental agencies with jurisdiction by law or special expertise and the public for a 30-day review/comment period. All issues have been addressed in Section 7 of the EA. A local resident requested consideration of a possible greenway in the Smith Springs Road area. Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) supported full implementation of the proposed Master Plan Update. TWRA expressed concerns regarding potential loss of public hunting opportunities due to the reallocation of lands for greenways, but also believed the process described in the Master Plan Update provides a mechanism for resolving potential land use conflicts. District 33 Metro Councilman supported the Proposed Master Plan Update and the request for a greenway in the Smith Springs Road area. The Town of Smyrna commented it believes it inappropriate for the Corps to require cost sharing for recreational projects. The Town believed the statement that “current [water withdrawal] rates are considered to be at the limit of what the project resource can provide” is not supported and appears to be in contradiction to past reports for J. Percy Priest. It further believed that requiring other sources for water withdrawal requests is contrary to the Water Supply Act of 1958. The

Town also outlined areas where it has an interest in use of Corps managed public lands for greenways and recreational use. The Tennessee Wildlife Federation (TWF) provided support for the alternative for the Master Plan Update with a Revised Scope. TWF requested the Corps ensure lands designated to be returned to wildlife habitat and public hunting (offset for mitigation) be of equal to or higher in wildlife value than those being lost. All issues except discussion of water supply have been addressed in the EA. Water withdrawal is beyond the scope of the Master Plan Update and EA and must be addressed by other Corps elements.

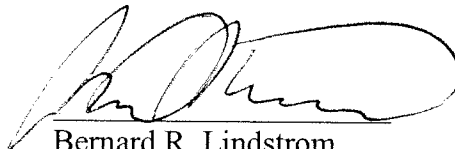
6. Pursuant to the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1958 and the Endangered Species Act, as amended, coordination with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, and TDEC, Division of Natural Areas was conducted through scoping and EA review. Additional coordination would continue as necessary to ensure there are no significant impacts to state or Federally-listed species. The agencies were in agreement with this course of action.

7. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 requires each Federal agency take into account the effects of its undertakings on historic properties included in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The Tennessee State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) understands the Master Plan Update and EA are planning documents. There is no stated implementation of undertakings. Proposals for specific actions would be reviewed on an individual basis and coordinated with the SHPO.

8. The preferred alternative has no potential implications under Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management). Impacts to wetlands would be avoided or minimized and mitigated by implementation of designated corridors for outgrant requests. The proposed project area is located in an attainment zone for purposes of the Clean Air Act Conformity Rule. Finally, the proposal is in compliance with Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice.

9. I have reviewed the comments and EA in light of the general public interest, and have determined that the work would not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended. Accordingly, I have concluded that an Environmental Impact Statement concerning the proposed Master Plan Update for J. Percy Priest Lake is not required.

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Date

  
Bernard R. Lindstrom  
Lieutenant Colonel  
Corps of Engineers  
District Engineer